Activity # 3.2

Learning Activity: Beliefs as a Barrier to Problem-Solving

Goal: Help stimulate participants thinking about how personal beliefs may serve as a
barrier to creative problem-solving

Materials:
Handouts for each student: Agree/Disagree questionnaire
Flipchart to record group responses
Markers
Tape (so groups can post their discussion notes *if this method is selected*)

Time:
3 minutes to complete individually
5 minutes to discuss in pairs (or groups)
15 minutes to debrief the entire group

Instructions:
Instruct participants to spend 3 minutes answering the questions.
Divide participants into pairs or teams (or assign two questions to each pair/team and ask
them to discuss why they answered agree or disagree). Ask them to discuss their answers
for 5 minutes. Possibly have them record their responses on flipcharts.
Debrief by:
 a) Allowing each pair/ team to present or
 b) Facilitator review each question and allow for active participation

Key Learning Points:
Be aware of your personal biases.
Avoid allowing them to influence how you solve customer service problems.

> BELIEFS AS A BARRIER TO PROBLEM-
> SOLVING

Differing beliefs about problem-solving can complicate our lives. We don't usually express the beliefs directly. We only show the edges. The following statements were designed to stimulate your thinking about the beliefs which may be a barrier to problem-solving.

UNCOVER YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT PROBLEM-SOLVING

Please circle each statement either: A for agree
                                                    D for disagree

1. If you did not cause the problem you cannot be hurt by it.   A   D

2. If you can identify who caused the problem, you are excused from taking action to solve the problem.   A   D

3. If you did not cause the problem, it is inappropriate for you to solve it.   A   D

4. If someone did not tell you what to do, you cannot be responsible for not doing it.   A   D

5. If you do not understand something, it is the other person's responsibility to make sure that you understand it.   A   D

6. If you don't understand something, it is your responsibility to make sure you do.   A   D

7. If the situation is unfair, you are not responsible for doing things to improve it.   A   D

8. It is reasonable to expect that you will not be given a job until all customer expectations have been completely thought out.   A   D

9. Defining work expectations and requirements is part of each person's job.   A   D

10. If someone else makes the mistake, that means you are not responsible for doing anything.   A   D

Answer Key

UNCOVER YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT PROBLEM-SOLVING

Please circle each statement either: A for agree
D for disagree

Recommended responses

1. If you did not cause the problem you cannot be hurt by it.   **D**

2. If you can identify who caused the problem, you are excused from taking action to solve the problem.   **D**

3. If you did not cause the problem, it is inappropriate for you to solve it.   **D**

4. If someone did not tell you what to do, you cannot be responsible for not doing it.   **D**

5. If you do not understand something, it is the other person's responsibility to make sure that you understand it.   **D**

6. If you don't understand something, it is your responsibility to make sure you do.   **A**

7. If the situation is unfair, you are not responsible for doing things to improve it.   **D**

8. It is reasonable to expect that you will not be given a job until all customer expectations have been completely thought out.   **D**

9. Defining work expectations and requirements is part of each person's job.   **A**

10. If someone else makes the mistake, that means you are not responsible for doing anything.   **D**